
Louisiana

Success Story:

Partnership Grows Business for Housing Programs in Southeastern Louisiana

Outline of Need

Guaranteed housing specialists in the Amite Area Office were having difficulty in successfully promoting the guaranteed housing program to realtors in southeastern Louisiana. Many realtors in rural areas of southeastern Louisiana were having a very difficult time understanding the difference between the single family housing direct loan program and the single family housing guaranteed loan program.

How Rural Development Helped

In the summer of 2003, the Amite Area Office was contacted by a representative of the Greater Baton Rouge Board of Realtors with an offer to participate as a presenter in a continuing education course they were proposing to sponsor. USDA Rural Development agreed to participate as a presenter.

The Results

After the first presentation, it was obvious the continuing education courses were going to a successful method of promoting the guaranteed housing program. The realtors were curious, very inquisitive, and excited about having an opportunity to use the program. As the years have passed, USDA Rural Development has become a permanent part of the continuing education courses sponsored by the Greater Baton Rouge Board of Realtors. USDA Rural Development personnel have had an opportunity to dispel many of the negative myths about USDA Rural Development housing programs and are having an opportunity to properly train new realtors as they are entering the profession.

The partnership with this realtor group is expanding, and now, presenters include not only guaranteed housing specialists, but direct housing program specialists as well. As a result of this partnership, USDA Rural Development has participated in exposition events sponsored by the realty group which has helped place our agency on a first-name basis with other mortgage lending professionals, appraisers, title companies, inspectors, developers, and contractors throughout the area.

Both the continuing education and expo efforts have provided an excellent forum for increased contact with the minority community. It is estimated that over 25 percent of participants at each meeting or expo are minorities. Since the beginning of this partnership, approximately 1,200 realtors, of whom 300 are minorities, have participated in the education course.

This partnership has contributed substantially to the unprecedented growth of the Amite Area Office's Guaranteed Housing Program.

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